



**Committee on
Homeland Security Democrats
Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member**

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**HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE RANKING MEMBER
QUESTIONS FEMA'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY**

Lack of Staff as well as Policies and Procedures for Providing Assistance Raise Issues

WASHINGTON – Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), Ranking Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, sent the attached letter to David Paulison, Acting Undersecretary of Emergency Preparedness and Response, to congratulate him on his new role, and to urge him to immediately address the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) lack of commitment to diversity in hiring and an unequal distribution of disaster assistance.

According to recent reports, discrimination complaints at FEMA have nearly tripled since the last fiscal year—soaring from 60 to approximately 200 as of the end of August. FEMA's management ranks also appear to lack diversity. Very few of the 20 people listed as "Senior Staff" on FEMA's website are women or minorities.

"If they are accurate, these numbers seem abysmally low," Congressman Thompson said.

There are also issues about the equitable distribution of disaster assistance. Many Gulf State residents have criticized FEMA for being slow to issue disaster relief funds.

Rep. Thompson also stressed the need for FEMA to comply with federal goals requiring that 23% of federal contracts be awarded to small, disadvantaged, veteran and women-owned businesses to spur economic development and rebuilding in these hard-hit areas.

"Diminished participation of these local and regional businesses will adversely impact the ability of the affected communities to rebuild their economies and begin a process of sustainable economic development," Rep. Thompson added.

A pdf. copy of the letter is attached.

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